

"The Samuel Adair Cabin"  
Osawatomie  
Miami County  
Kansas

HABS No. KANS-18

HABS  
KANS  
61-05A  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
120 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## HISTORICAL AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## "SAMUEL ADAIR CABIN"

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Address or Location: Osawatomie, Miami County, Kansas

Present Owner: State of Kansas

Present Occupant: None

Present Use: Museum

Brief Statement of Significance: Not only is this structure a typical frontier cabin but is also notable because John Brown made his headquarters here.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:  
Samuel Glenn 1854; Reverend Samuel L. Adair c. 1854  
by purchase for \$200.00; Adair's relations to 1912;  
State Of Kansas 1912 to present.
2. Date of Erection: The cabin is said to have been built  
in 1854.
3. Architect, builder, suppliers etc.:  
"It (the cabin) was built by a squatter named Samuel  
Glenn." (Whittemore, Margaret, Historic Kansas, A  
Centenary Sketchbook, University of Kansas Press,  
Lawrence, Kansas, 1954, p. 85)
4. Original plans: None located.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: In the 1860's a  
study room was added on the west. The cabin was moved  
from its original site (near Osawatomie) to the park  
in 1912. In 1928 the shelter was erected around the  
cabin. (Interview with caretaker, June 25, 1958)
6. Important old views and references:  
Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Photograph  
Division, FK2-M5,0.79 5-interior views (one drawing,  
4 photos) and 6 exterior views (2 original setting)  
Also FK2-M5,075A one photo exterior in original setting.

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B. Historical Events Connected With the Structure:

In 1854 five of John Brown's sons had made land claims south of Osawatimie but were threatened by pro-slavery sympathizers. Upon hearing this, John Brown left his North Elba, New York, residence to bring arms and ammunition to the Kansas territory. When he arrived he made his headquarters in this cabin which was owned by his brother-in-law the Reverend Samuel L. Adair. Later Brown concealed eleven slaves in this cabin aiding them in their escape to freedom from Missouri. (Whittemore, Margaret, Historic Kansas, A Centenary Sketchbook, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, 1954, pp. 85-86).

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None.

Prepared by JQ Noffinger date 7/58

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character:

This is a typical frontier log cabin of territorial times.

2. Condition of Fabric:

The building has been placed in an all weather enclosure and is well preserved and maintained.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: not recorded

2. Foundations: no information on original foundations.

3. Wall Construction: Dressed oak logs notched and laid horizontally with plaster chinking.

4. Porches: none

5. Chimneys: One stone chimney exists on the east outside wall. The sides of the chimney are covered with plaster.

6. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Doorways are fashioned with simple sawn planks. The doors are made of several planks pegged together. Crude workmanship is displayed.

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- b. Windows and Shutters: Windows are of 12 pane wooden sash pegged construction. No evidence was found of shutters.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with shed roof extension on addition. Hickory purlins and oak shakes.
- b. Cornice, Eaves: Exposed purlins are employed on the ends and unfinished lumber on the sides of the building.
- c. Dormers: None

8. Interiors:- Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor Plans:

Originally this cabin had one ground floor room and one attic room. In the 1860's another ground floor room was added to the rear and a shed roof was formed.

2. Stairways:

An original crude ladder exists in the front room.

3. Flooring:

All new.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

The walls are whitewashed. The ceiling of exposed unfinished logs (purlins) and sawn planks is whitewashed.

5. Doorways and doors:

Only one interior doorway and door exists. This is a crude construction of sawn planks pegged together.

6. Trim: none

7. Hardware:

Hinges, latches, etc. are wooden and hand constructed.

8. Lighting:

No original lighting left.

9. Heating:

By single fireplace in front room.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation:

At present in an enclosure in John Brown Park. Original orientation not recorded.

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2. Enclosures: none
3. Outbuildings: none
4. Walks, driveways etc: none
5. Landscaping: none.

Prepared by JP Noffsinger date 7/58